

MONO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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MINUTES

May 8, 2003 (Adopted 6.12.03)

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Scott Bush, Rick Kattelmann, Sally Miller, Steve Shipley
STAFF PRESENT: Scott Burns, CDD director; Greg Newbry, Larry Johnston and Keith Hartstrom, senior planners; Stacey Simon, deputy county counsel; C.D. Ritter, commission secretary

1. **OPENING OF MEETING:** Vice-Chair Rick Kattelmann called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT: OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT. No items. CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENT.**
3. **MEETING MINUTES:** Review and approve minutes of last meeting. **MOTION:** Adopt the minutes of April 10, 2003, as submitted. (Bush/Miller. Ayes: 4-0. Absent: Waite.)
4. **CONSENT AGENDA:** No items.
5. **PUBLIC HEARING: DRAFT JUNE LAKE TRAIL PLAN.** *Consider recommending to the Board of Supervisors an amendment to the June Lake Area Plan to include the June Lake Trail Plan as an appendix.*

Senior Planner Larry Johnston and Don Bauer, of Bauer Planning Services, provided an overview of the yearlong development of a trail system. The process included workshops with the June Lake Citizens Advisory Committee, public notices in the media, and written notices to 800 property owners. Planners received numerous comments and petitions.

The intent was to refine the existing trail system plans for expected growth. Implementing trails would require USFS involvement, and its analysis and the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) process are yet to come. In order for USFS, Caltrans and Mono County to coordinate trail segments, a master plan would be needed. The USFS is working with long-term funding, and the plan includes context-sensitive solutions for bicycle provisions along Hwy. 158. With regard to the letter received from Caltrans, Bauer thought Caltrans' comment letter was not consistent with discussions throughout the year, and inferred disconnect between Caltrans concepts and its relationship to communities.

The trail is gentle and generally flat, designed to appeal to the majority of visitors and residents. The next refinement might consider a side-slope trail. Unlike Mammoth Lakes, June Lake residents prefer an unpaved 3'-5' trail that is more rustic, less urbanized. There was discussion about uses of the trail, and whether they might conflict. The trail around June Lake is designated foot traffic only, and Silver Lake is equestrian only.

For the Mammoth Lakes trail, USFS required that the Town do a NEPA document, and then move forward. The concept of where the trail would go was refined during that process, and USFS was still the lead agency. The June Lake trail procedure would be similar. Commissioner Miller repeatedly emphasized the need for environmental work on the *entire* plan. Johnston cited a USFS letter stating that the agency would do environmental documentation, and indicated that planners have to rely on the federal government to do the process appropriately.

There was concern about piecemealing the project. Johnston indicated that USFS needed a project to look at, and adoption of this plan would provide that. He also noted that USFS has no money to push trails.

Enforcement regarding use conflicts on the narrow Yost trail and mountain bikes in the wilderness at Agnew Lake is the responsibility of USFS, according to Johnston. Mono County would not take on violators.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Tammi Prestwich, cabin owner near Boulder Lodge, read a letter from all five Horseshoe cabin owners, refuting the statement that the terrain is flat (70 railroad tie steps lead down to the lake), noting the unrealistic expectation that people would stay on the trail, and predicting that a good downpour would bring debris (needles, mud, trash), creating a mess and causing erosion.

Jil Stark, Silver Lake cabin owner, commended Commissioner Miller's questions. She claimed the USFS has a questionable track record. If June Lake, a town of 600 residents, expects 3,600 people in the Rodeo Grounds, there is a definite need for a master plan to deal with the influx. She expressed dismay that no Citizens Advisory Committee members attended the hearing.

Randall Prestwich recalled the June Lake amphitheater/trails project in the mid '70s. It was defunct by the '80s due to USFS funding cuts. The project, along with the Oh! Ridge kiosk, was unmaintained and subsequently abandoned. He feared another white elephant was up for approval. The plan relies on future funding from other agencies, and Mono would be responsible for maintaining the trail. He saw a need to consider the impact on the community in general and on public safety.

John Davis, owner of two properties on USFS land, served on the June Lake Community Design Committee. He cited concerns of trail proximity to homes, potential problems with second homes, public safety, and impact on property values. He bought property backing to USFS land for privacy.

CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENT.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Miller indicated she has long supported the concept of a trail plan. However, she would not support this proposal because it does not mention NEPA analysis. By suggesting that Mono County take the lead in raising money for environmental analysis, the USFS is "throwing it back" and setting the level of county responsibility. Johnston explained that trails might possibly be funded by grants that would include NEPA.

Commissioner Miller cited incompatibility issues along USFS trails, and suggested the plan needs to deal with these. Johnston indicated the USFS participated in the development of the project, and submitted a letter regarding its role with the NEPA process. The proposal could be sent back to the CAC, but the basic questions are enforcement and reliability.

Commissioners were concerned that issues of the people at the hearing had not been addressed because they were not part of the majority. Johnston indicated that the CAC had received petitions against certain segments, changed parts of the plan in response to comments, and then taken a vote to recommend the proposal.

Some rhetorical questions arose regarding the trail plan: What's the actual purpose? Who would it serve, residents or visitors? Is the intent to make the trail user-friendly for Intrawest? Is there an alternative to the whole plan? Why is accessibility needed near cabins along the lake? What about "people calming" to address increased use on an easily accessible trail? Is there a legal right to propose a trail through someone's property? (Note: Bauer explained that no trails were proposed on private property.)

An objective of the June Lake Area Plan is multi-modal transportation, including walkability. With thousands of visitors at a time, the more access they have, the more they will be "all over the place." Is that what June Lake wants? Johnston indicated the CAC has recommended a community-oriented trail, without maps.

Commissioner Shipley suggested the plan be done under phases contingent upon meeting requirements, but indicated he was totally confused on the need. "If issues had been addressed by the CAC, how are they all coming up now?" Johnston said the CAC conducted a well-advertised hearing, considered comments both verbally and in writing, and voted to recommend the plan to the Planning Commission. The intent was getting ahead of things, having a plan in place.

Burns suggested continuing this item in order to answer questions; if the end document changes significantly, then refer it back to the CAC.

MOTION: Continue the public hearing on the June Lake Trail Plan till next meeting to allow further staff review. (Shipley/Bush. Ayes: 4-0. Absent: 1.) The Commission wanted more information before making a decision

REOPEN PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Stark was concerned that people at Intrawest's project would drive to a trail elsewhere if they couldn't walk across the street to a trailhead. Commissioner Bush questioned how Intrawest's 3,000 people would affect the trail. Could the trail system handle it, or would it be antiquated with so many people? Johnston noted that the Land Use Designation is 10 units/acre (900 units). Commissioner Miller countered that a Specific Plan could change that, though.

Mr. Prestwich noted that if the plan were approved, there is no funding. If Intrawest gets in, he predicted, not only would the plan be funded, it would be there to stay. CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENT

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS:

- 1) NEPA analysis of cumulative effects; 2) prioritization and implementation of plan phasing;
- 3) cross-jurisdictional issues (funding, enforcement, maintenance, safety, use conflicts); 4) USFS qualms; and 5) absence of June Lake area commissioner.

7. **WORKSHOP:** *Continued to next meeting.*

- A. Design Review Guidelines: Senior Planner Greg Newbry
- B. Central Business District Parking Inventory for June Lake, Lee Vining and Bridgeport

8. **REPORTS**

A. DIRECTOR: Status-quo budget for Planning Commission; no Intrawest proposal for Rodeo Grounds yet; Bodie RV Park applied for building permits for a 10-unit hotel/store; Specific Plan for 24-unit subdivision proposed on Cunningham property north of Lee Vining (no development on Mono Lake side of property); LDTAC reviewed preapplication for Mono Lake Committee's education center (possible wetlands consideration, probably to Planning Commission by fall); Neubauer/Jennison smaller subdivision at McGee; Wofford project in Chalfant Valley coming up; June Lake Highlands Specific Plan supplement to environmental under way; LDTAC to review preapplication for RV park and store in Walker area, possible conflict of interest for Commissioner Bush; and Double Eagle Resort build-out proposal at June Lake.

B. PLANNING COMMISSIONERS: No items.

C. INFORMATION

- 1) Final Order of Administrative Citation Appeal Hearing on APN 60-160-15
- 2) Environmental Scoping Meeting in Chalfant Valley: May 12, 2003

8. **ADJOURN:** 12:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, C.D. Ritter, commission secretary